

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3421

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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 8124

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, KN

SUBJECT: KIM YONG-SAM BLASTS GOVERNMENT FOR KIM OK SON AFFAIR
BUT HANGS ON TO JOB

1. AT PRESS CONFERENCE OCTOBER 17, NDP PARTY PRESIDENT KIM YONG SAM HAD SOME FINAL WORDS ON KIM OK-SON AFFAIR, CALLED ON NDP TO RETURN TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY, AND LIVING UP TO EXPECTATIONS ANNOUNCED THAT HE HIMSELF WOULD NOT RESIGN AS SOME IN PARTY HAD ADVOCATED. WITH ONLY 18 OF HIS OWN BACKERS WITHIN PARTY PRESENT, KIM SAID KIM OK-SON'S EVICTION FROM NATIONAL ASSEMBLY WAS TRAGEDY, DISGRACING ROK PARLIAMENTARY HISTORY. THE GOVERNMENT'S UNLAWFUL AND IMMORAL POLITICAL RETALIATION SAID KIM WILL BE SUBJECT SEVERE JUDGEMENT OF HISTORY. KIM DENOUNCED AS SHAMELESS SPEAKER CHONG IL KWON'S AND PRIMIN KIM CHONG PIL'S IPARTICIPATION IN VOTE TO ACCEPT KIM OK-SON'S RESIGNATION WHICH NDP CONSIDERED DEPARTURE FROM NORMAL TRADITION ACCORDING TO WHICH SPEAKER AND PRIMIN SHOULD REMAIN ABOVE THE FRAY.

2. REGARDING HIS OWN ROLE, KIM SAID THAT HE FELT RESPONSIBLE FOR NOT BEING ABLE TO RESTORE DEMOCRACY IN KOREA, HE HAD NO LINGERING ATTACHMENT TO HIS POSITION AS
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PARTY PRESIDENT, BUT IN INTEREST PRESERVING PARTY HE WOULD

NOT STEP DOWN NOW, ALTHOUGH THIS WOULD BE FACE SAVING MOVE. INSTEAD, HE WOULD STAND ACCOUNTABLE AT PARTY CONVENTION NEXT MAY. HE APPEALED FOR CESSATION NDP FACTIONAL INFIGHTING, THEN ISSUED VEILED THREAT TO THOSE WHO HAD TRIED TO DUMP HIM, SAYING HE WOULD NOT TOLERATE ANY ACT HARMFUL TO PARTY FROM NOW ON.

3. FIRST PRESS COVERAGE OF CONFERENCE HAS BEEN EXTENSIVE, REPORTING IN GENERAL AND VAGUE TERMS KIM'S CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT AND HIS PLANS TO RETAIN PARTY LEADERSHIP. SPECIFIC MENTION OF KIM'S ATTACK ON GOVERNMENT'S UNLAWFUL AND IMMORAL ACTS AND ON CHUNG IL KWON AND KIM CHONG PIL HAVE BEEN OMITTED, HOWEVER.

COMMENT: CONFERENCE WAS IN FACT HURRIEDLY CALLED EVENING OCTOBER 16 TO HEAD OFF OCTOBER 17 MEETING OF NON-MAINSTREAM MEMBERS WHO HOPED TO FORCE KIM OUT OF HIS JOB. WHILE NON-MAINSTREAMERS CALLED OFF MEETING AND KIM'S MOVE APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN TACTICAL SENSE, HIS LEADERSHIP IN KIM OK-SON AFFAIR AND "FAILURE TO HAVE COURAGE TO RESIGN IN FACE OF INDIGNITY" HAVE BEEN SHARPLY CRITICIZED WITHIN PARTY THUS, HIS LONGER TERM POSITION AS NDP LEADER HAS BEEN FURTHER WEAKENED.
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